



City of Ferndale Fire Rescue

Kevin P. Sullivan
Fire Chief

Brian E. Batten
Fire Marshal



March 13, 2013

Michigan State Senate
Senate Committee on Regulatory Reform
The Honorable Tory Rocca, Chairman
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senator Rocca,

I respectfully submit for your review my reasons for supporting Senate Bill 235 and ask that the Senate Committee on Regulatory Reform support this bill.

Fire protection, detection and alarm systems are very complex and vital for the safety of our citizens, businesses, and communities. Since the 1800's fire sprinkler systems have protected our commercial buildings and the owners interest. When designed, installed and maintained properly, these systems are 100% successful in controlling a fire until the fire department arrives, and in some cases extinguishing the fire. Losses are minimal, and the continuity of business is interrupted only for a short time.

The enforcement of system maintenance has long been the responsibility of the fire service. Fire inspectors have spent countless hours training on how they systems are designed, operated and maintained so that we can identify deficiencies and code violations. This training includes the science of fire, and how it affects the built environment. How different commodities burn and what is the best way to provide protection. Education, engineering and enforcement are our venue. Prevent fires by educating our customers (business owners and citizens). Should a fire occur, engineer ways to control and suppress it. Enforce the minimum standards of the codes adopted by the State and our communities.

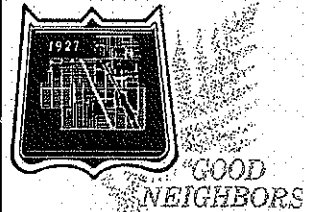
Recently, economic cuts in municipal budgets have resulted in the loss of seasoned, well-trained inspectors in the Construction side of code enforcement. As a result new Mechanical and Electrical Inspectors may not have the training or experience in dealing with the complexities of the various fire protection, detection and alarm systems. Reduced budgets make the availability of training difficult. As a result our communities have leaned on the fire service to fill the gap. The problem is that the fire inspector although certified and experienced has no authority in the construction process under Act 54.



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As a result serious disconnects in the construction process can occur. Delays in the approval process and increased inspections occur, each costing time and money.

Fire Inspectors are typically trained under the standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association. There are three levels of certification, Fire Inspector I, Fire Plans Examiner, and Fire Inspector II. These certifications along with the training and knowledge of fire science make the Fire Inspector a valuable asset in our communities when combating the ravages of fire. Michigan can proudly boast that we have more Certified Fire Inspectors at all NFPA levels than any other State in the Union. In fact, we have over 1/3 of the certifications at each level, and that number continues to rise each year.

I am sure that you will find that the Fire Inspectors of our great State are well trained and educated. With their experience in fire protection, detection and alarm systems, as well as their knowledge and experience of fire science, giving them recognition and authority as limited Mechanical and Electrical Inspectors in Act 54, will greatly enhance and streamline the construction process, while maintaining safety for our businesses and citizens. I appreciate your time and urge the Committee to vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you for your continued service to the State of Michigan and our communities. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. My email is bbatten@ferndalefirerescue.org, telephone number 248-632-2096.

Respectfully

Brian Batten, CFPS
Fire Marshal

cc: Fire Chief Kevin Sullivan, Ferndale Fire
Michigan Fire Inspectors' Society